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ABSTRACT

The model of motivational focus that is used as the basis for a number of educational programs called Application/Motivation Programs that have been developed at Harding School, in Rochester, New York, is discussed in this paper. The motivational model is described as including a sequence that involves self-choice, self-direction, personal involvement, and follow through, with each of these four areas designated as a major or secondary goal for each program. Titles of the programs described include Reading is FUNdamental, Sustained Silent Reading, Read-a-Thon, Student Book Store, and Pioneer Week. It is reported that positive opinions toward the program have been expressed by parents, students, and teachers. (MKM)

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MOTIVATING STUDENTS:

The AMP's Program Concept

prepared for presentation at

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by

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AN INTRODUCTION

An overriding goal of education is to teach children to read. More time and money seem to go into the development of basal series, supplementary materials, low vocabulary-high interest texts, kits, games, and so on, than we care to estimate. We develop behavioral objectives and evolve management systems. We diagnose, prescribe, and remediate. Our training as educators concentrates heavily on a scientific understanding of the processes of Reading. Yet so often we find our students apathetic and unresponsive. "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink" is a saying that applys all to often. We forget that a horse needs to be thirsty first.

But how can we create a thirst for Reading in our students? Good teachers use "motivational techniques" in every lesson. Yet looking at the picture, or guessing at the contents of the small brown bag or a chance to play the teacher made game can go just so far in motivating a student to learn. These don't rivit his attention, stir his heart or create an all consuming desire to know more. This kind of motivation can really only come from within the student. Yet we can help set a climate where a more intense commitment to learning can occur.

We too often indulge in the "scientific" elements of our profession while we ignore the "magical" parts. Helping students find what "turns them on" is the art of teaching and our highest calling. To touch a responsive chord in a child, to be sensitive enough to hear it and to give that child the tools that he or she needs to create a symphony is a dream that every educator hopes to see come true a few times in a career. Yet everyone of us is capable of touching many students. Only a few symphonies will be written, but by focusing on the magical unscientific side of our profession occasionally, we can generate many happy tunes.

At Harding School we have a number of programs whose major goal is motivational. We have nicknamed these programs AMPs (Application/Motivation Programs) because like the TV program The Electric Company we want to turn on the power to learn that lies within each one of our students.

The discussion of human motivation that follows will hopefully serve as the theoretical base on which these programs are constructed.

WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

At its core, motivation is the reason behind any human action. It is the answer to the question "why?" that is so often asked in response to human behaviors we do not understand. All human behavior is motivated and purposeful. It is not random or passive. When most educators and psychologists use the term motivation, they "describe those processes that can (a) arouse and instigate behavior; (b) give direction or purpose to behavior; (c) continue to allow behavior to persist; and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior." (Wlodkowski, -7).

MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES:

As professional educators, we work with this sequence to encourage students towards the acceptance and application of skills and attitudes we deem valuable for the attainment of future growth and happiness. It is important to note however that the mere attainment of desired skills is not enough. Educators also want students to "enjoy", "feel positive about", "appreciate", "demonstrate an interest in", and so on. The attainment of the desired attitude is, in most instances, equal in importance to the attainment of the particular skill. In many cases, such as in the development of life long habits of Reading for pleasure or engaging in regular exercise, the attainment of the proper attitude is far more important than the ultimate skill level reached.

Obviously it is much more difficult to lead people to the acceptance of a particular attitude than it is to teach them a set of skills in isolation. If we are not concerned about attitudes, we can teach students a set of skills using behavior modification techniques, reward systems, highly competitive situations, etc., without regard to the message we send with our instruction. Because we do care about our students attitudes toward the things they learn, we need to always be aware that "the medium is the message", ie: The attitudes we model in our instruction teach much more powerfully than anything we say.

MOTIVATION AND VALUES:

The task of teaching skills and attitudes, which ultimately results in the teaching of common social values, is a mighty one. The human spirit is endowed with a degree of independence from birth. Each one of us has been given a unique world view, our own "perceptual screen", through which we filter all of our experience to build our unique view of reality. Even very young children make judgements about the nature of their world and decisions about how they will behave in that world based on this personal view of reality.

Every classroom has 20 to 30 such views of reality, each resulting in behavior who's motivation may only be partially evident. And each set of behaviors will reflect many values; personal, familial, ethnic,, religious, socio-economic, etc. Society largely determines which skills, attitudes and values are most appropriately delt with by schools. Educators have a role in this selection process, but it is not a central one. Educators do play a central role as implementors of this social policy however. We choose the "medium". We determine the sequences in which certain skills will be taught. We choose the method and materials of instruction. We choose the attitude that will accompany instruction. We choose how often these skills, methods, and attitudes will be repeated.

MOTIVATION AND CHOICES:

How do we penetrate the perceptual screens of our many students so that the message is received more or less intact? How do we cause students to accept social values that schools exemplify, while rejecting others that are conflicting or counter-productive? Realistically we cannot compel the aquision of a skill. We can however encourage and present ourselves in such a way that the ideas we offer are seen as attractive and desirable. This allows the student to choose our attitudes and values. And self-choice is of critical importance in this area of motivation.

If we reject the idea that one human being can make another do (feel, believe, etc.) anything that he does not want to do, then we will see how important the concept of individual choice is in human motivation. For if I cannot be compelled to do anything, then I must choose to do everything! Sometimes my choices are conscious, often they are unconscious, based on habits, patterns and feedback from the environment filtered through my perceptual screen. In all cases I choose to see things as important or trivial, as meaningful or irrelevant, as worth fighting for, or not worth the struggle based on my own patterns and values. And, if I can be touched deeply by an experience or idea, generated in school, I can then choose to embrace the attitudes and values of the school.

INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS:

What should be the nature of the school experience that will lead to the acquisition of positive skills, attitudes and values? ie: Should we emphasize intrinsic or extrinsic motivators? Intrinsic motivation refers to the pleasure involved in doing an activity, where as extrinsic motivation emphasizes the reward that will be forthcoming upon successful completion.

There are data that indicate that if an activity is initially interesting, the introduction of external reinforcers (ie: stars, grades, money, etc.) reduces the quality of work and lowers personal satisfaction. (Leeper, Green, Nisbett-4; Calder, Staw-1). Where a specific task is not particularly interesting, however, the introduction of an extrinsic motivator may increase task satisfaction. (Calder and Staw).

According To Staw: "There is no doubt that grades, gold stars, and other such incentives can alter the direction and vigor of specific "in school" behaviors (E.G., getting students to complete assigned exercises by a particular date). But because of their effect on intrinsic motivation, extrinsic rewards may also weaken a student's general interest in learning tasks and decrease voluntary learning behavior that extends beyond the school setting. In essence, then, the extrinsic forces that work so well at motivating and controlling specific task behaviors may actually cause the extinction of these same behaviors within situations devoid of external reinforcers. This is an important consideration for educational organizations since most of an individual's learning activity will no doubt occur outside of the highly regulated and reinforced setting of the classroom." (Staw,-6).

It would appear then, that in order to maintain an overall positive attitude toward learning in general we must make very careful use of external motivators, even though they may be immediately effective.

If we look within ourselves at the reasons for our own behavior we will find a mix of internal and external motivations. I spend evenings writing papers such as this partly for the recognition that comes from making a presentation at an important convention, and partly because I derive some personal satisfaction from writing and clarifying my ideas in print. The personal satisfaction in writing exists seperate from the presentation, (although the presentation may provide a reason to discipline oneself to complete the writing). If the presentation itself is a flop or is poorly attended I will still have had the personal satisfactions associated with the writing. I am partially protected against failure by my intrinsic motivation on the writing task. The person whose total orientation is extrinsic however cannot function without the outside motivator and he must be successful to achieve any satisfaction in the completion of the task. It should be obvious that the more intrinsically motivated a person is, the more he controls his own life and destiny. To gain control of one's own life is certainly a worthwhile goal of the edicational process.

MOTIVATION AND MODELING:

If, as stated earlier, "the medium is the message"; that is, that what we do and what we are speaks much more loudly than what we say, how do we create an effective medium to stimulate and inspire our students? How do we cause them to emulate us and the things we see as important? Part of the answer rests with our ability to model the behaviors we see as important.

If we think that Reading is fun we need to read for pleasure where our kids can see us and give them an opportunity in school to read for pleasure also. We need to share the excitement of our books with our students and encourage them to do the same. If we feel that physical fittness is important, we need to watch our personal habits and provide times for students to exercise with us. If we feel that it is important to treat each other with courtesy and respect then we need to be aware of how we treat those around us and not be afraid to apologize when we fall short of our own ideals.

When what we do and what we say are consistant, a powerful positive force is created showing uncommitted or weak valued people just what is to be gained by choosing a particular set of behaviors and attitudes. Psychologists call it validation and preachers call it wittnessing. In any case this type of modeling can have a strong influence on behavior, especially if the consistancy can be maintained over a relatively long period of time.

THE AMP's CONCEPT AND MOTIVATION:

AMP's programs touch on many of the important factors in motivation mentioned above. All AMP's programs focus heavily on creating positive attitudes in students. Programs such as Reading Is FUNdamental and Sustained Silent Reading focus specifically on creating positive attitudes about Reading as an important leisure activity. Read-a-Thon, Lengths for Lives, and the Mitten Tree help create positive attitudes toward service to others. Band and Chorus help create positive attitudes toward the routine discipline of practice and promote feelings of team work and cooperation in a non-competitive atmosphere. While intra-murals activities create the same kinds of attitudes in a competitive setting. At the base of every AMP's Program is a goal to improve a student's attitude.

A second factor in motivation that is common to all AMP's Programs is self-choice. I believe that some degree of choice is necessary to secure any degree of commitment on the part of the student. Through the act of choosing the student makes a commitment to become involved with a book, an idea, an activity, a skill.

The commitment may be tentative, yet the degree of involvement and any sense of personal satisfaction that comes from participation in that activity belong to the student alone. The student does not feel forced, coerced, bribed, or manipulated. He is not dehumanized. His uniqueness as a human being is recognized and honored by providing him with choices to be made on the basis of his own unique world view. Every AMP's Program allows students to make choices.

Another factor related to choice is that of direction or relevance. It is hard to determine whether an activity (book, idea, skill, etc.) <u>becomes</u> relevant because a student chooses it, or whether a student chooses an activity <u>because it is</u> relevant. Put another way, do I choose to learn to read music in order to be in the chorus or do I join chorus because I have learned to read music? My guess is that the former is the more powerful motivator. I choose to work harder at learning my skills when I have an opportunity to apply those skills in some enjoyable way. I believe that a student chooses what is relevant to him at a given time. Through the act of choosing he makes a positive statement about an activity's relevance, and a commitment to follow through as best he can to completion. All AMP's Programs apply basic academic, physical, or social skills in enjoyable activities.

A model that helps illustrate this motivational sequence follows:

ENERGY → (CHOICE ↔ RELEVANCE) → INVOLVEMENT → COMPLETION

Energy refers to the individuals ability to act. Choice, relevance and their inter-relationship have been discussed above. Involvement refers to the degree to which an individual can become absorbed in a particular activity. And completion describes the degree of follow through that results from involvement in this activity. Different AMP's Programs focus on different elements of this sequence (illustrations will be given later).

The earlier discussion of Attitudes and Choices may leave the reader confused as to the relative importance of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivators in AMP's Programs. Our basic approach is to focus on self choice, self-direction, personal involvement, and follow through. We want to change and/or reinforce attitudes, behaviors, and habits. Significant changes in these areas can only be built from the inside out, with the active participation and cooperation of the student. Therefore our attention must be directed at developing intrinsic rewards in our programs. Do we use extrinsic motivators? Yes we do. We may reward an outstanding essay with a RIF book of the student's choice. We may sponsor tournaments in our sports program. We may even award a gold star or Happy Gram to a deserving student. But for the most part, we de-emphasize extrinsic rewards and competition and focus on the more meaningful intrinsic rewards. This decision is supported

by a considerable body of research and opinion. (See Wlodkowski 1977, pp 8,9: 1978 p152).

The last motivational factor I would like to relate to AMP's is the important role of modeling. As stated previously, what we do speaks much more loudly than what we say. Therefore it is important that our words, our actions and our ideals are consistant. It is important that everyone in the school behave as consistantly as possible.

Somehow kids rather expect their teacher to say that Reading is important and worth giving time to. But think of the impact on kids when they read with the Custodian, or the school Secretary, or the Principal, or the Nurse! The cumulative effect of everyone behaving consistantly relative to this value is much more powerful than the model set by one teacher in one classroom. As Building Administrators we can see that this consistant modeling behavior can have a cumulative effect by maintaining programs over many years. Think of the positive effect on a child beginning school as a Kindergartner and experiencing daily silent Reading periods with all staff modeling the desired behavior over a period of seven years! Think of the effect of being given regular opportunities to choose books to own seven times each year over a seven year period! The positive cumulative effect of long term consistant modeling behavior can only be achieved through the active participation of the Building Administrator. His support is more than essential. It is critical.

MOTIVATIONAL FOCUS:

I stated earlier that different AMP's Programs address different parts of the motivational sequence shown below:

ENERGY ⟶ (CHOICE ⟷ RELEVANCE) ⟶ INVOLVEMENT ⟶ COMPLETION

Each AMP's Program has a major motivational goal focus with one or more major secondary goals of nearly equal importance. The programs and goal focus areas are shown in the following chart: (SEE CHART #1 FOLLOWING PAGE).

APPLICATION/MOTIVATION PROGRAMS - MOTIVATION GOAL FOCUS AREAS

PROJECT TITLE / MOTIVATION AREA	ENERGY	CHOICE/ RELEVANCE	INVOLVEMENT	COMPLETION
Reading is FUNdamental	S	M	SI	S
Sustained Silent Reading	S	SI	M	S
Read-a-Thon	S	S	M	SI
Indian Summer Day	S	SI	M	S
Ground Hog Day Festival	S	SI	M	S
Lengths for Lives	S	S	SI	M
Intra-Murals	S	SI	M	SI
Chorus	S	S	M	SI
Jazz Band	S	S	M	SI
Student Book Store	S	S	M	SI
School Helpers	S	S	M	SI
Principal's Council	S	S	M	SI
Safety Patrol	S	S	M	SI
Outdoor Education	S	SI	M	S
Halloween Day Festival	S	SI	M	S
Pioneer Week	S	SI	M	S
Minnesota School Affect Assessment	S	SI	M	S
The Mitten Tree	S	SI	M	S

CHART #1

KEY - M = Major Goal Area
SI = Major Secondary Goal Area
S = Secondary Goal Area

The chart shows that for most AMP's Programs Involvement is the key goal focus area, for the ability to lose oneself in an activity reflects the individuals depth of commitment and the activity's relevance. It is an indication that completion will be achieved. Some programs such as Outdoor Education, Sustained Silent Reading and Pioneer Week identify choice and relevance as major secondary goal areas, as making choices is an important part of these activities. For others such as Band, Chorus, and Safety Patrol the only choice is to participate or not participate. Here our secondary goal focus shifts to completion where we hope to develop follow through and encourage students to persevere through both the work and the fun of these programs to reach some culminating activity.

The only area not listed as a major goal, or major secondary goal area, is "Energy". We assume that all of our students possess enough native intelligence and natural curiosity to participate in AMP's activities in some way. We hope that successful participation in any of these programs will cause a general energizing of students to try in many areas of their school experience.

The next chart shows the various skill application areas of our recent AMP's Programs. Some of these programs are quite narrow in their focus (e.g. Reading is FUNdamental) while others are quite broad (e.g. Outdoor Education). Some areas such as Reading and Citizenship receive much attention while others, such as Math and Science have not been developed adequately. (SEE CHART #2 FOLLOWING PAGE).

Are AMP's Programs unique? No. Every school does some of these things. But few take time to examine the reasons why, beyond the fact that they are fun. What is unique about AMP's is the concept developed to support these many varied activities. We work in a time of accountability where a focus on basic instruction is important. I believe that these activities, implemented under the AMP's concept are basic and that we can justify the time we spend involved with them.

Supporting Data:

Are there any data to support involvement in AMP's Programs? Yes, there are. Many AMP's Programs are open ended, especially those that focus on Reading. Therefore it is impossible to isolate the impact of a RIF Program or an SSR Program in standardized test data. However, a major goal of these programs is to improve attitudes and habits, and we can look at these.

In two random surveys of parental opinion made three years apart a strong positive opinion was voiced by parents relative to what they had heard from and seen in their kids. A surprising degree of consistancy was evident as can be seen below: (SEE CHART #3 FOLLOWING PAGE).

WARREN HARDING SCHOOL

APPLICATION - MOTIVATION PROGRAMS

CHART #2

PROJECT TITLE / APPLICATION/MOTIVATION AREA	READING	WRITING	MATH	CITIZENSHIP	SCIENCE	P.E.	MUSIC	ART
Reading Is FUNdamental	X							
Sustained Silent Reading	X							
Read-a-Thon	X		X	X				
Indian Summer Day	X	X		X		X	X	X
Ground Hog Day Festival	X	X		X		X	X	X
Lengths for Lives			X	X		X		
Intra-Murals						X		
Chorus							X	
Jazz Band							X	
Student Book Store			X	X				
School Helpers				X				
Principal's Council				X				
Safety Patrol				X				
Outdoor Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Halloween Day Festival	X	X		X		X	X	X
Pioneer Week	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota School Affect Assessment	X			X				
The Mitten Tree				X				

RIF PARENT SURVEYS

June 1976 and 1979

CHART #3

Questions	6/76	6/79
Does your child tell you about the books he/she receives on distribution days?	96%	97%
Does your child show you the books he/she receives on distribution days?	94%	94%
Did your child tell you about Reading is Fun Week prior to a distribution?	75%	66%
Did you see your child reading his/her RIF book? Have you been asked to read from your child's RIF book?	82%	94%
Did your child show excitement and pride of ownership in the books that were selected?	91%	95%

However, a sharp rise was seen in 1979 in how often parents actually saw their kids Reading at home, while a drop was seen in the amount of discussion about Reading is Fun Week prior to distribution day.

I interpret this rise in Reading at home for pleasure to be an indicator of changing habits and attitudes. The drop in prior discussion of RIF Week is attributable to the regularity of book distributions and our failure to emphasize this aspect of the program.

Additional data was gathered in 1979 that was not requested in 1976. Parents surveyed stated that their child had a shelf or other storage place at home, on which to keep his/her RIF books (95%). The group also reported that they had seen changes in their child's attitude toward, and interest in, Reading in "the past year or two", (89%). There were many parent comments but one from the 1976 survey stands out - "The RIF books are the only books my two kids have read on their own at home".

Student and teacher surveys have been done on SSR. Student and Parent surveys have been completed on our Outdoor Education Program. These are generally positive but rather lengthy to review here for our purposes. A general survey called the

Minnesota School Affect Assessment is given to students each year. In addition to standard items on Reading, we have added items on RIF, SSR, and Outdoor Education.

The Minnesota School Affect Assessment uses two forms; form A in grades 1-3 and form B in grades 4-12. In order to maintain direct comparability throughout our Building we use form A in grades 1-6. Form A asks kids to "Mark the nose on the face that shows how you feel about learning to read better", and so on. The faces are drawn as shown below:

Data is reported on a five point scale with 1.0 most positive, 3.0 most ambivalent and 5.0 most negative. We consider composite scores for grades 1-6 that fall above 2.5 to be very good. The table below shows composite data.

Minnesota School Affect Assessment
Grade 1-6 Composit Scores

CHART #4

ITEM	SCORE
#007 Learning to Read Better	1.55
#017 Reading Stories	1.97
#018 Sustained Silent Reading	2.31
#063 Reading Is FUNdamental	1.41
#064 Outdoor Education	1.21

All of the scores fall above 2.5 with all but one above 2.0. This indicates a very positive school wide student reaction to these programs. "Learning To Read Better" looks even more favorable when compared to the cluster of items called "Academic Set". The Academic Set cluster contains items on Math, Social Studies, English, and Spelling, as well as learning to read better. The 1-6 composite score for Academic Set is 2.96, a somewhat mediocre rating. Compare that with the 1.55 composite rating for "Learning to Read Better" and you will see that something is creating a definite positive attitude among our students in the area of Reading. I believe that a large part of the credit goes to Reading is FUNdamental and Sustained Silent Reading, our AMP's Programs that focus on Reading.

SUMMARY:

We cannot compel our students to accept our ideas, values, or attitudes. We can however recognize each individual's ability to choose or reject our values and work to make those ideas, values and attitudes more appealing. We can do this through providing for individual choices, by modeling desired behaviors, by working to intensify personal involvement, and by encouraging follow through to completion. The impact of any attempt at changing behavior in this way will be more powerful if the teachers and staff see a common purpose and act consistantly over time under the leadership of the Building Principal. Then many activities that were done before simply for fun or because they were expected can be seen to have a double edged purpose and can be imbued with new life and vigor. The concept underlying Application/Motivation Programs is one vehicle for achieving this.

CONCLUSION:

Motivating students is an art. It requires sensitivity and a deep respect for each person's individuality and human dignity. At its deepest most meaningful level it has us trying to shape the self-image. It has us tinkering with the human spirit. Formulas fail when we seek this goal. Only the quiet listening for the dawning of Spring in each of our students will announce the beginning of something new and fragile for us to nurture. But like the gardener who prepares the soil, plants the seed, and waits expectantly and confidently for Spring to burst forth, so too can we prepare the soil of our school and plant the seeds of our ideas, values, and attitudes, and wait confidently to see the Spring of change burst forth in our students.

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